(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) to (d) Steps have been taken by the Archaeological Survey of India in consultation with the law enforcing agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation, Customs, directorate of Revenue Intelligence and the State Government Police to check the smuggling of ancient statues and idols by stepping up vigilance and intensifying checking at all the Customs exit channels, as well as by enforcement of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972. Apart from the Monument Attendants, armed guards and private security agencies have also been deployed at the centrally protected monuments/ museums for security purposes. The amendment of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, is also under consideration for making the law more stringent.

Performance of ASI

249. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has shown dissatisfaction with the performance of the Archaeologicl Survey of India and has decided to professionalise it:

(b) if so, whether the Ministry is pressing for a separate Indian Archaeological Service within the Central Services hierarchy;

(c) whether this proposal has been considered by the Central Government;

(d) if so, what are the main reasons put forward by the Ministry for separate Archaeological Service; and

(e) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Keeping in view the increasing responsibilities and the new technological opportunities that are available, there is considerable scope for improvement in the performance of the Archaeological Survey of India.

(b) Yes, please.

(c) to (e) The creation of a separate Central Archaeological Service is expected to bring in more professionalism in the management of archaeological monuments and optimal utilization of the resources of the Archaeological Survey of India in integrating cultural assets.

Antiques/articles stolen from National Museum, Delhi

250. DR. ABRAR AHMED:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of antiques/articles of historical importance stolen from the National Museum, Delhi, during the last three years, year-wise; and

(b) how many, out of them, have since been recovered?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) On 28.06.2003, a Pistol has been found missing from the Maritime Heritage Gallery in the National Museum, New Delhi. This Gallery is under the charge of the Indian Navy. The matter has been reported to the Delhi Police for investigation. No other case has been reported during the last three years.

Revenue from Duty Free Shops

251. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the year-wise details of amount of funds generated from sale at duty free shops at all international airports throughout the country during the last three years;